



Appleby Archaeology UPDATE

Newsletter of the Appleby Archaeology Group

November 99

Chairmans Report

It was my privilege to attend two conferences on archaeology in September in Sheffield and York, thanks to funding received from the Millennium Commission.

Demystifying Archaeology

The first was organized by the Council for Independent Archaeology of which Appleby Archaeology Group is a member organization. The CIA exists to support amateur societies like our own and the conference was entitled "Demystifying Archaeology". They suggested that archaeology has become so specialized that a barrier has been created between the professional and the amateur and that this effectively prevents many people from taking part in the study of the past.

The conference aimed to break down this barrier and included talks on all aspects of practical archaeology. There were many amateur societies there demonstrating just how much can be achieved on a low budget with the minimum of equipment and expertise.

One of the most inspiring talks was by a lady from Hereford (Ruth Richardson) who has been studying field names. Field names provide a simple and practical method for referring to a piece of land. The names survive for generations despite dramatic changes to the landscape which may obliterate a field's original purpose. She showed how valuable field names can be in reconstructing past land use.

The conference left me inspired by what an amateur group like ours could achieve. With this aim in mind, of demystifying archaeology, I will be organizing a short course in the summer entitled DIY Archaeology for those who would like to learn some basic techniques for studying the past.

If anyone would like to see a copy of the full conference report including a write up of the talks given there then contact me for a copy.

Archaeology and Education

The second conference was run by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) and attracted people from all over the country and abroad. It explored ways of widening public awareness of the role of archaeology and current educational practices. Topics included Primary, Secondary and Further Education but also explored alternative approaches to learning such as storytelling and experimental archaeology.

As well as expanding our own knowledge about the past I feel it is important that we share our interest as widely as possible with other members of the community. Archaeology is a fragile resource and, if destroyed, is gone forever. We need to inform the public about the historic environment if it is to be protected for the future.

Meetings

Tom Clare gave an inspiring talk in October about the archaeology that surrounds all of us in our villages. Thanks to a thorough publicity campaign a large number of non-members came to the talk which resulted in several new members. The Herald also gave generous space to a report about the evening. For those who missed out, it is included overleaf along with a report on the November meeting about Medieval Friaries.

Also included in this edition of the newsletter is a summary report on the earthwork investigated by members of the group in the summer. I hope that this will be the start of further explorations into aspects of the Eden landscape by the group.

Martin Railton

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please note that subscriptions are due
in January

Please use the form provided to renew
your subscription for another year.

The Archaeology of Westmorland Villages

The first Lecture of the autumn season by Tom Clare left the Appleby Archaeology Group and visitors intrigued and stimulated to find out more about their local villages.

Mr Clare began by emphasising that although a third of Medieval villages had been deserted, two thirds had not. He suggested that it was in, around or underneath to-day's villages that evidence of the past life of villages should be looked for.

He identified features to look for. These included cockpits, archery butts, maypoles of which a good example is found at Warcop. In addition there may stocks, village pounds, many of which are being preserved, and cross bases such as the one at Great Ormside.

Buildings provide much information. Cross-passage houses which developed from the Medieval long house, predominate in the Eden Valley. Many examples can be seen today. Outside walls are, and were normally rendered or lime washed concealing architectural and archaeological features so that external appearance may give little indication of origins. Date stones may also be misleading as the date may refer to alteration to the house. Many cross-passage houses were quite grand and are likely to have been occupied by yeoman. Single storey cottages with two rooms, one for the animals, are evident at the edge of villages and are different status buildings.

Some villages had manor houses, in Crosby Ravensworth earth works show a moated house. Many villages have a hall which refers to the largest house in the village, not necessarily the manor house. Churches are not found in all villages as some stood on link roads, some are similar suggesting that they had the same architect builder, for example the churches at Crosby Garrett and Bolton.

Artefacts such as coins and pottery, found in houses, middens, and fields give clues to date,

occupation and life style. An example given was the finding of copper needles under a window sill at Yealand Redmayne, they must have fallen through a crevice perhaps when the person sewing stood up.

Mr Clare described in detail the layout of villages and their surrounding field systems. There is little known of what happened in the Medieval period but earthworks suggest that the villages were bigger. Estate plans and Ordinance Survey maps are valuable sources. The linear village common in the Eden Valley, with its houses tofts, back lane and strip fields beyond, has its origins in Medieval times or earlier. Lanes led away to the unfenced common land, a good example can be seen at Great Asby where hedgerow dating would suggest the lane has been there for 900 years. It was pointed out that footpaths may delineate the extent of the village. Drove ways to common land and beyond are very ancient and many survive in Cumbria and may now only be indicated by surviving boulders.

Villages were probably planned following the destruction of the north after the Norman Conquest. In the 13th and 14th century the population decreased and many villages were deserted though some were resettled later in 18th century when farming technology was changing and population increasing. Village architecture reflects both function and period. The agricultural function of villages of Medieval and Tudor times persisted virtually unchanged, in some instances, to the 1940s. The 19th century sees the growth of industrial villages, the railway village of Tebay and the mining villages of Cleator Moor are examples.

In concluding it was emphasised that there has been a historical evolution of the villages and this can be studied using today as a starting point. The question was posed: how do we best preserve the past to meet the needs of today's village?

P.H.Rouston

Medieval Friaries

The Group and visitors enjoyed an interesting talk at their November meeting from Barbara Harbottle on Medieval Friaries. Miss Harbottle had researched several of the friaries which she described.

She began by explaining that around 1215 St Francis of Assisi founded the first order of friars. This was to be a new and vigorous approach to religious life and differed from the monastic system in that friars saw themselves as missionaries, preacher and educators, attached to an order but able to move within the community and from site to site. Monks had local stability bound to their monasteries. Friaries were built in centres of population, they were urban foundations.

There were two principal orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The Dominicans or Black Friars arrived in England in 1221. They were interested in the training and education of scholars and went first to Oxford. There was a rapid growth in the number of their friaries in 1260 there were 35 by 1348, 57. The Franciscans or Grey Friars arrived three years later going first to Canterbury, by the 14th century they had 60 houses. There were other lesser orders these included the Augustinian friars or Austins and the Carmelites or White Friars.

Twenty one friaries were set up in the north of England between 1231 and 1291. Four orders had houses in Newcastle, in Carlisle there were Dominican and Franciscan friaries, in Penrith an Augustinian house and in Appleby a Carmelite friary was founded in 1281. Friaries were established at Alnwick, Bamburgh, Barnard Castle, Berwick, Durham, Hartlepool and Jarrow. Five of the friaries were short lived and all were dissolved by 1538/39.

Miss Harbottle then talked about the friary buildings and the evidence from local archaeological research, showing slides to

illustrate the features described. Two sites where evidence of friary buildings are readily seen are Hulne Park at Alnwick, a Carmelite friary and the Dominican friary at Blackfriars, Newcastle.

Friaries were on the periphery of towns each covering a fair acreage. The buildings, including ancillary buildings such as stables and breweries, were within a precinct. The central area, the cloister, was surrounded by ranges which would house the refectory and dormitories, covered walks around the cloister provided access to these buildings. The cloister was a place for recreation and fresh air, evidence from scratch marks suggests that shove halfpenny and hopscotch may have been played!

The friary churches, orientated east west, were rectangular and formed by two buildings the choir and the nave. When the church needed to be enlarged an aisle or a new church was built. There was a walking space between the choir and nave, pierced by a central arch which might carry a tower. The pulpit was in the nave and from there the friars would preach to the community at large. Services in the choir would be for the order.

There is documentary evidence to suggest that there were libraries but there is no structural evidence. An intriguing footnote was the idea that the friars had study bedrooms. The clues to this are the arrangement of windows and the divisions in walls which can be seen at a site in Gloucester.

P.H. Rouston

**WINTER EVENTS on
LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

CARLISLE CASTLE Saturday 11th Dec.

A guided tour of the castle has been arranged for the group starting at 1.00pm. There will be time afterwards to visit Tullie House museum or do some Christmas shopping! The visit and tour will cost £3. Please meet outside the main entrance to the castle just before 1.00pm.

AGM and MEMBERS EVENING

Tuesday 11th Jan.

A brief AGM starting at 6.30pm will be followed at 7.00pm by a programme of short talks by members of the group on archaeology and local history. There will also be a New Year raffle with prizes being announced on the evening.

PERCIVAL TURNBULL Tuesday 1st Feb.

Perceval Turnbull will be talking about several archaeological sites in the area including: the Prehistory of the Shap area; the Gilbertine Priory at Ravenstonedale; Milefortlet 21 and the Roman West Cumbrian Coast.

The next meeting of the group will be on Tuesday 7th March. Speaker to be announced.

Meetings are held at the Appleby Grammar School Intake Centre from 7.00-9.00pm

Non-members are welcome, £1 Entrance

OTHER EVENTS

There are three study Sundays planned at Higham Hall near Keswick titled "Scraping the Surface: Archaeology for Everyone". The cost is £17 per day and the dates are: 27th February, 26th March and 16th April.

For further details contact Higham Hall direct on (017687) 76276.

Member's Evening

Following the success of last year's event we will be holding another evening of talks in January. Any member willing to give a talk on a favourite subject, either on archaeology or local history, is invited to register their interest using the form provided. Talks should be up to 20 minutes long including time for questions.

Contact Martin if you require any help with preparation.

Raffle

We will be holding a raffle on the evening of the AGM with tickets being sold on the night. Any donations of prizes would be gratefully received. If you have a prize to offer please drop it in at Eden Organics wholefood shop, 5 Bridge Street, Appleby before the event.

Appointments

Due to other commitments our treasurer has resigned from the committee and we are seeking a replacement. If you are interested in proposing someone or proposing yourself for the position then please contact Martin before the AGM. The committee meets 4 times a year and the role would entail keeping a very basic set of accounts for the group and producing a yearly report.

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